



RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

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DRPT Announces \$2 Million in Available Transit Funds *Virginia transit operators encouraged to apply for lifeline transit grants*

RICHMOND, Va., July 24, 2006 – The Commonwealth Transportation Board has authorized the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) to include \$2 million in one-time funding in the current Six-Year Improvement Plan (SYIP) to support lifeline transit funding. These funds are intended to support access to jobs and special needs transit services for elderly, disabled and economically disadvantaged Virginians.

The updated SYIP approved in June reflected a decline in transit operating and capital funding over previous years. The state transit capital match was reduced from 63% in FY06 to 22% in FY07, the lowest in program history, while the state transit operating match was reduced to the lowest level in ten years. As a result, many transit operators have been forced to consider cutting service.

DRPT Director Matthew Tucker said, "The decrease in available funding for transit is being felt across the Commonwealth. This one-time funding will help maintain critical service for access to basics such as grocery stores, medical facilities and employment. While it doesn't address the ongoing shortfall in transit funding, it will certainly help people in the short term."

Transit operators may request this special financial assistance by submitting a letter to DRPT explaining their situation and need for assistance. DRPT is contacting each transit operator to outline the specific qualifications for funding, which include requirements for information such as a description of the service or capital project that is subject to cancellation and supporting documentation to prove that the service or project is in jeopardy due to funding constraints. Funds may support operating or capital expenses directly related to the continuation of service. The letter to transit operators is available online at www.drpt.virginia.gov in the Spotlight section.

All requests for funding are due to DRPT by September 7, 2006. The Commonwealth Transportation Board is expected to consider final projects for funding at their October 19, 2006 meeting.

About DRPT

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is the state agency responsible for rail and public transportation in Virginia. One of six agencies that report to the Secretary of Transportation, DRPT facilitates the movement of people and goods throughout Virginia with three main areas of activity- rail, public transportation and commuter services. We help people and businesses find the smartest distance between two points. Visit us at www.drpt.virginia.gov.

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